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Leadership Competency Series

Developing Emotional Intelligence – Part II

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY / High 'emotional intelligence' alone doesn't guarantee the learning of emotional competencies unless this potential is translated into specific on-the-job capabilities producing success and sound relationships, says M R CHANDRAMOWLY

IT was a tough day for Mohan Singh, the CEO of blue chip company who was conducting the half-yearly performance discussions with Devan Varma, his VP- Sales. Devan is a gold medallist from a premium business school and an ace performer too. He was able to increase the sales turnover very rapidly in the beginning of his innings and was a candidate for global leadership pool. The 360 degree feedback system, one of the performance appraisal processes, reflected negative on his people relationship. While he achieved some of the objectives for the half year, more or less, his people relationship was a concern for both internal and external customers.

Mohan Singh during discussing with Devan for more than an hour knew that he should now talk about this feedback of managing emotions. He also knew that, if it is conveyed improperly, it could injure Devan who is highly enthusiastic key person of the company and he may leave the job. The CEO decided to open the dialogue, now. "Devan, I agree with your self-assessment of performance. You have rightly rated the top five objectives as successfully met compared to the other three, which are low." "I appreciate your rational approach of self assessment." "But tell me, how did you achieve these top 5? What happened?

What did you do? What do you thing about the approach you took to accomplish those objectives and how did you feel about it?"

Devan narrated the details and the CEO captured the key pointers of Devan's success. Then, he switched over to the three objectives of low performance and asked "why it happened? What went wrong? How do you compare both these results which are best and not so good, in terms of your competency of people relationship? Devan after a brief silence said, "I was at my best while accomplishing the top five and I wasn't best working out those 3."

The CEO said: "Devan, you are likely to have found that when you were at your best, you were exhibiting many EI characteristics. When you were at your worst, you probably were not. On your achievement side, you were able to assess yourself realistically and displayed a level of high confidence. While you were able to use your

emotional competence to some extent, probably you could not consider controlling the bad moods and emotional impulses of some of our key customers. You have the ability to control emotions of both self as well as others, which has been meritoriously proved in the results of these five objectives but not in the other three areas. Please reflect on that to bring out the perfection. I am sure you would like to chalk out a development plan and action agenda. Think about it since it could move you up in career. You can always count on me for any help and support". The CEO was capable of recognising Devan's emotions on the feedback besides managing his own emotions on the point of discussion.

'Emotional Intelligence' (EI) is the capability to recognise emotions of self and others to achieve better results by managing relationships. The 'capability' refers to usage of intellect, the discriminating power - emotional competencies. It is about how we are able to notice our own feeling and those of others. It is connecting head and heart with an objective of enhancing people relationship. A leader who is able to recognise and manage his emotions will be able to manage himself, better. Once he manages the 'self' better, he will be able to empathise with others and then manage them too. It is simple to understand the logical connection between emotions and performance. Our emotions drive our thoughts.

Thoughts decide our behaviour. Behaviour triggers our actions and our actions produce results. The quality of results depend on the quality of our emotional competence. It is possible to rewire the people responses to changes by managing emotions. Our rewired responses change individuals and group behaviour and the new behaviour enhances performance.

Leadership success depends on integrated running of three concurrent programs of inner self: Cognitive abilities (IQ) technical skills (TQ) emotional intelligence abilities (EI). IQ and TQ are threshold requirements for most of the jobs. Possession of IQ and TQ is the price of admission to enter the door of job market. EI competencies on the other hand represent those star qualities.

Star qualities are the key competencies for personal victory.

The EI competencies, which are more important and crucial than IQ and TQ not only help us become successful in work and as leaders, but help us succeed in life too.

A study of 15 global companies attributes 85-90 per cent of leadership success to emotional intelligence. At the highest leadership levels, EI accounts for virtually the entire advantage. A 'sales roles study' of 44 Fortune 500 firms shows that high-EI salespeople produce twice the revenue of average performers.

Emergence

The word 'emotional intelligence' was introduced to psychology by John A Mayer and Peter Salovey. They defined EI in terms of being able to monitor and regulate one's own and other's feelings, and to use feelings to guide thought and action. Goleman who has popularised EI continued their theory and fine-tuned into a model of five basic emotional and social competencies for useful understanding of how they matter in work.

Daniel Goleman made some specific observations when he popularised emotional intelligence. A part of human brain does most of the processing of human emotional response. That part of the brain is called reptilian brain which has similar functions of those of reptiles. These responses mostly occur automatically like a fight-or-attack response triggered by threatening situations. Humans have evolved in such a way that a 'neutral-hijacking' takes place providing a quick answer to critical situations. In humans the reptilian brain has links with the neocortex which can exert some control over the largely automatic responses of the reptilian brain. Goleman says that it is possible to hone this skill of generic component of controlling emotions to achieve greater abilities.

Competencies

Emotional competence is the capability learnt based on principles of emotional intelligence for outstanding performance in work. Consider the finesse shown by a professional doctor talking to a patient. It will have superb influence, which is an emotional competency. Influencing is about getting others to respond in a desired way. The competency 'influencing' has two dimensions of capabilities: empathy - the ability to read the feeling of others, and the social skill - the ability to handle those feelings artfully. Goleman's competency model has five basic elements of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, motivation, self-regulation, empathy and adeptness in relationship) that determines our potential for learning the competencies.

Our emotional competence indicates the amount of our potential translated into job capabilities. For instance, achieving results is possible based on emotional competencies of self-assessment, self-confidence and self-management besides motivation and social competence of handling relationships.

Being high in emotional intelligence itself does not guarantee a person, the learning of emotional competencies that matter for success. If we say that one has high emotional intelligence, it simply means that he has an excellent potential to learn emotional competencies. One may score high in 'empathy' and yet may not have the capability of translating that feeling it into superior customer service, effective coaching or mentoring, or moulding individuals of diverse interest to an effective team. Unlike IQ, EI can be improved throughout, which offers innumerable chances to hone our emotional competence. It increases as we learn to be more aware of our moods, to handle strong

emotions better, to listen and empathise. It enhances as we become more and more matured emotional. Emotional maturity itself is a process of becoming more intelligent about our emotions and our relationships.

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